dream country

part two

of the endless

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the SANDMAN™

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

neil gaiman
shawn mcmanus

BZZZZZZ

HOLD ON!

HI, BARBIE. IT'S ME.

IS IT ALL RIGHT IF...

I MEAN...

CAN I COME IN? AND TALK? TO YOU?

SURE, HAZEL. COME IN.

I HOPE IT'S NOT TOO LATE OR ANYTHING. I MEAN, IF YOU WERE TRYING TO GET SOME SLEEP, I CAN GO AWAY AGAIN.

NO... I WASN'T TRYING TO SLEEP. YOU WANT ANY-THING?

JUST TO TALK.

I FIGURED THERE'S STUFF YOU KNOW THAT NO ONE ELSE HERE WOULD. I MEAN, I'M NOT SURE I CAN TALK TO FOXGLOVE ABOUT IT, AND WANDA DOESN'T KNOW FROM SHIT ABOUT THAT STUFF, AND THESSALY, I MEAN, SHE'S SO VANILLA, AND SCARLETT'S OUT OF TOWN, SO THAT LEFT YOU.

OKAY. SO WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?

HAZEL? WHAT'S THE MATTER?

WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOU'RE PREGNANT?

WHAT?

LOOK, IT'S A SIMPLE QUESTION AND IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER JUST TELL ME YOU DON'T KNOW AND I'LL GO AWAY AGAIN.

HAZEL. YOU'RE. I MEAN. YOU'RE A *DYKE*.

OH *GREAT*. TELL ME SOMETHING I *DON'T* KNOW.

AND YOU *REALLY* THINK YOU MIGHT BE *PREGNANT*?

MM-HMM.

YOU WANT TO TELL ME ABOUT IT?

WELL, ABOUT SIX WEEKS BACK I WOUND UP WORKING REALLY LATE, AND ONE OF THE WAITERS GAVE ME A LIFT HOME, AND WE WERE, LIKE, BOTH A BIT DRUNK...

WELL, *FOX* HAD GONE BACK TO VISIT HER FOLKS, AND *HE* WAS SORT OF TIRED, AND HE ASKED IF HE COULD STAY OVER, SO *I* SAID *SURE*.

YOU SAID...?

WELL, HE WAS *TIRED*, SO WHAT *ELSE* WAS I GOING TO DO?

AND HE *PROMISED* NOTHING WAS GOING TO HAPPEN. AND *THEN*, WE WERE LYING TOGETHER, AND HIS THING WENT ALL HARD, AND WE SORT OF *DID* IT.

WELL, I FIGURED THERE WAS *NO WAY* I COULD GET *PREGNANT*.

YOU MEAN HE USED A *CONDOM*?

NO. BUT WE DID IT STANDING UP.

STANDING *UP*?

YEAH. SO IT *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN *FINE*.

AND IT WAS ALL OVER *REALLY* FAST. I MEAN, IT WAS KIND OF *DUMB*, BUT HE SEEMED SO SAD AND SORT OF LONELY, AND ANYWAY HE'S GAY. MOSTLY.

WELL, MY PERIODS ARE *USUALLY* PRETTY CLOCKWORK. I MEAN, ME AND FOX *ALWAYS* COME ON WITHIN A DAY OF EACH OTHER. BUT THIS TIME IT JUST DIDN'T COME...

UH...HAZEL... THIS WAITER...

RAPHAEL.

RIGHT. RAPHAEL. I MEAN, WHAT DID YOU *THINK?* WHEN HE ASKED TO STAY OVER?

I THOUGHT HE WAS REAL TIRED.

...DID YOU ENJOY IT?

NOT MUCH. IT HURT A BIT. I *CAN'T* BE PREGNANT, *CAN* I?

HAZEL... LOOK, WAS THIS YOUR *FIRST* TIME? WITH A *GUY?*

MM-HM.

OKAY. WELL, THERE ARE *KITS* YOU CAN BUY, TO CHECK IF YOU'RE PREGNANT.

I DON'T HAVE TO KILL A RABBIT, DO I?

WHAT?

I THOUGHT SOMEONE SAID AT SCHOOL THAT THE TEST WAS LIKE, IF THIS RABBIT DIED OR NOT. AND I *WON'T* KILL A RABBIT.

I'M A *VEGETARIAN.*

I *THINK* THAT WAS IN THE OLDEN DAYS. THESE DAYS IT'S JUST A BLUE RING IN YOUR PEE.

HAVE *YOU* EVER BEEN PREGNANT?

MM. ONCE.

WHAT HAPPENED?

I HAD AN ABORTION. I WAS STILL IN HIGH SCHOOL.

DOES IT *HURT?*

NOT REALLY. YOU GET AN ANAESTHETIC.

SO WHAT DO I DO?

YOU GET A HOME PREGNANCY TEST. YOU GO SEE YOUR DOCTOR. THEN YOU TALK TO FOXGLOVE AND FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO NEXT.

AND, LISTEN, HAZEL. WHEN IT COMES TO SEX... WELL, DON'T EVER BELIEVE ANYTHING A GUY SAYS.

GUYS THINK WITH THEIR DICKS.

OH. I MEAN, I'D HEARD PEOPLE SAY THAT. OTHER WOMEN. DYKES. BUT I FIGURED THAT WAS JUST BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T LIKE MEN...

BUT YOU LIKE MEN.

I SUPPOSE. I HAVEN'T SLEPT WITH ONE FOR TWO YEARS...

YEAH. I LIKE MEN. BUT I *STILL* WOULDN'T LET ONE STAY THE NIGHT UNLESS I WAS PLANNING TO SLEEP WITH HIM.

MM. CAN I HAVE THE FROG MUG? THAT WAS WHY I TOLD FOXGLOVE I WAS COMING DOWN HERE. TO GET OUR MUG BACK.

THANKS. I MEAN FOR *EVERYTHING*. FOR *LISTENING*. FOR THE *ADVICE*.

NO PROBLEM. LET ME KNOW HOW IT GOES. OKAY?

I WILL. SORRY.

LISTEN, YOU LOOK LIKE YOU NEED SOME SLEEP.

MAYBE I DO. G'NIGHT.

SILLY GIRL.

SHE'S RIGHT. I AM TIRED. BUT I'M SCARED...

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M SCARED OF. SOMETHING IN A DREAM I DREAMED TOO LONG AGO.

I DON'T WANT TO SLEEP...

TV. I'LL WATCH A LITTLE TV. THEN MAYBE I'LL GO FOR A WALK. WALK DOWN TO THE WATERFRONT AND STARE AT LADY LIBERTY WHILE THE SUN COMES UP...

...AND GET MUGGED AND RAPED BY A NEW YORK CRAZY BEFORE I GET FIVE BLOCKS. MAYBE NOT A GREAT IDEA.

...OF THE NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT MAINTAINS THE GIANT DOG SHOT DEAD ON 5th AVENUE THIS MORNING MUST HAVE ESCAPED FROM A PRIVATE COLLECTION...

OH GOD. MARTIN TENBONES. POOR MARTIN TENBONES...

...OLD-FASHIONED COTTON WOOL WHEN YOU COULD BE USING NEW WUNDAWOOL?

NOW IN CINNAMON, FRESHMINT, AND NEW SALSA FLAVORS...

...HURRICANE LISA SHOULD BLOW ITSELF OUT HARMLESSLY OVER THE NORTH ATLANTIC...

SHE'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL BABY, BARBIE. WE THINK WE'LL NAME HER AFTER YOU.

AND SHE'LL BE AVAILABLE IN CINNAMON, FRESHMINT, OR NEW SALSA FLAVOR.

THESSALY'S VANILLA.

HELLO BARBIE. MY NAME'S NUALA. I--I'M RATHER *NEW* AT THIS. IN FACT, I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T *BE* HERE *AT ALL*.

YOU HAVE TO BE *CAREFUL*. THEY *WON'T* TELL ME VERY MUCH. BUT THERE'S *SOMETHING BAD* ON THE WAY...

NODDING OFF. DAMMIT. MUSTN'T FALL ASLEEP.

WATCH THE STUPID TV.

OUR NEXT GUEST IS SOMEONE I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE ON THE SHOW--HUMANITARIAN, WIT, GOURMET AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLER...

...SO PLEASE WELCOME...

...YOUR EX-HUSBAND *KEN!*

HI, BARBIE! LONG TIME NO SEE.

EX-WIVES, HUH? ONE MINUTE, THEY'RE FRIGID BITCHES WHO CAN'T COOK TOO GOOD NEITHER.

THE NEXT THEY GO OFF TO NEW YORK AND PAINT *DUMB* THINGS ON THEIR FACES IN A DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO SEEM INTERESTING...

HAHAHAHAHAHA!

BARBIE-- IS THAT *TRUE*? ARE YOU SECRETLY A *REALLY BORING PERSON*?

HEY, THAT'S NOT THE *HALF* OF IT. SHE'S HANGING AROUND WITH DEGENERATE WEIRDOS AND PROBABLY CRACKING UP INTO THE BARGAIN...

UHN. THIS ISN'T WORKING...

OUGHT TO GO FOR A WALK...

...

A WORLD OF CURTAINS: I HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE.

I PUSH MY WAY THROUGH, DISTANTLY FEEL THEM REND AND TEAR.

I FEEL AS IF I AM FALLING; BUT I AM NOT FALLING. I AM WALKING.

THIS IS GOOD. I NEEDED TO GO FOR A WALK.

I CAN STOP WORRYING.

EVERYTHING'S JUST FINE.

Oh. It's you.

Well, you took your time, didn't you?

MIDNIGHT.

GEORGE WAITS, PATIENTLY.

FOXGLOVE CHEERFULLY ROLLED OVER WHEN HER ADVANCES WERE REBUFFED, AND IS ALREADY SNORING GENTLY.

HAZEL IS READING HERSELF TO SLEEP WITH RAYMOND CHANDLER'S *THE LONG GOODBYE*.

EACH NIGHT, BEFORE BED, THESSALY BRUSHES HER HAIR ONE HUNDRED TIMES.

SHE COUNTS EACH BRUSH STROKE.

WANDA SURFACES TO THE LOW BUZZ OF TELEVISION VOICES IN THE NEXT APARTMENT.

BARBIE, SHE THINKS. *THIN GODDAMN WALLS*, SHE THINKS.

AND THEN THE WARM DARKNESS TAKES HER BACK...

AND BARBIE?

BARBIE DREAMS.

LULLABIES OF BROADWAY

2

NEIL GAIMAN: WRITER
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ALISA KWITNEY: ASST. ED.
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THE SANDMAN

SANDMAN CHARACTERS CREATED BY NEIL GAIMAN, SAM KIETH AND MIKE DRINGENBERG

ONE O'CLOCK.

ALL ASLEEP.

THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP.

ALL ASLEEP THEY'RE ALL ASLEEP, EVERYBODY IS ALL ASLEEP...

MEN'S ASLEEP, LADIES ASLEEP, EVERY-BODIES IS ALL ASLEEP...

EVERYBODY BUT ME'S ASLEEP...

EVERYBODY BUT US.

IT'S TIME, MY BROTHERS.

FLY.

WANDA DREAMS.

DO YOU HAVE ANY NICE DRESSES?

WE HAVE LOTS OF NICE DRESSES. I WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE NICE DRESSES YOU WANT.

WILL I HAVE TO PAY FOR THEM?

YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO PAY FOR THEM.

1/2 OF A

WE WERE AT SCHOOL WITH YOU, WANDA.

WE ARE SO ENVIOUS.

1/2 OF!

HURRAH!

BECAUSE I DO NOT BEAR A GRUDGE, I WILL GIVE ALL OF YOU NICE DRESSES AS WELL.

ALVIN? IT AM ME, WEIRDZO LILA.

WEIRDZO LILA NO. 1

MY NAME ISN'T ALVIN. IT'S WANDA.

I'M A WOMAN.

SAL

YOU AM? THAT AM WONDERFUL NEWS! US MUST TELL WEIRDZO NUMBER ONE!

YES! THAT AM TERRIBLE NEWS! ME AM SO HAPPY!

US MUST OPERATE IMMEDIATELY TO MAKE YOU IMPERFECT.

DOCTORS! NURSES!

WEIRDZO NO. 1

NO-- PLEASE.

I'M SCARED OF SURGERY. I CAN'T DO IT. I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT. PLEASE...

INNOCENCE AM NO EXCUSE. HIM WILL THANK US ONE DAY. HIM WILL SAY, "WEIRDZO, YOU FINK. YOU CUT IT OFF. GET LOST."

WEIRDZO NO 1

OKAY. MAKE HIM READY FOR SURGERY.

FOR GOD'S SAKE! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME. I'M SCARED OF SURGERY. I WON'T DO IT. I WON'T DO IT...

LISTEN. HIM BE SO HAPPY US GOING TO OPERATE ON HIM.

IT AM SO GOOD. MAYBE HIM GIVE US PRESENTS AFTER.

SO WHAT YOU AM? A MAN OR A WOMAN?

WHATEVER YOU AM, WE MAKE IT BETTER.

NO.

...MMF... NO... JRM...

HAZEL DREAMS.

I'm on a train journey across a country I don't know. I don't know if I speak the language or not.

I don't know if I have a ticket.

A ticket inspector tells me that there is something wrong with my ticket. I have to go with him.

I didn't know that there were steps on trains.

He tells me there are cellars under all trains in this country. I have to go down.

The present I won with my ticket is in the box. I go to open it.

The baby smells of formaldehyde, not unpleasantly. It is cold and slightly clammy to the touch.

The autopsy scar is sewn together with black silk thread. It has been dead exactly seventy years.

It is perfectly preserved.

Foxglove is waiting for me, with her baby.

I cannot remember her baby's name. I cannot remember how old it is.

It's a boy, though. I remember that.

My baby is cold, so we put them together in a crib, to warm it up.

We love our babies.

My baby begins to move. I am unspeakably proud of it.

Now it smells of roses.

NO...

I know what it's going to do. I want to hide. I want to turn away. I want to stop looking.

I can't.

I hear Fox keening for her son. I cannot move.

And I know: once it's finished with Fox's child...

(Stop it, says Fox. Stoppit stoppitstoppitstoppit...)

Then it will come for us...

FOXGLOVE SLEEPS WITHOUT DREAMING.

DONNA?

DONNA CAVANAGH?

GO AWAY. LEAVE ME ALONE.

DONNA.

IT'S FOXGLOVE, NOW. THAT'S WHAT I'M CALLED. I HAVEN'T BEEN DONNA FOR TWO YEARS. MORE MAYBE.

DONNA'S SOMEBODY ELSE. DONNA'S DEAD.

DONNA.

DON'T CALL ME THAT! WHO'S TALKING, ANYWAY? WHO IS THAT?

IT'S ME. JUDY.

JUDY?

YOU CAN'T BE JUDY. YOU'RE DEAD.

YEAH. DEAD AS A DODO. IT'S A REAL SHIT, ISN'T IT?

AND IT'S YOUR FAULT. YOU KNOW THAT?

MINE...?

SURE IT IS. IF YOU HADN'T TAKEN OFF, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN HANGING AROUND IN THAT DAMNED DINER...

AND I'D STILL BE ABLE TO TASTE, AND FEEL, AND DREAM...

SO, YOU WITH ANYONE THESE DAYS?

...YES.

YEAH? WHAT'S HER NAME?

HAZEL.

IS SHE AS PRETTY AS ME? IS SHE?

DOES SHE MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE I MADE YOU FEEL?

NO...

NO SHE'S NOT. BUT SHE'S NEVER HIT ME.

ARE YOU A GHOST?

SOMETHING LIKE THAT. A GHOST, OR A DREAM. I DON'T KNOW. DOES IT MATTER?

DONNA...

I JUST WANT US TO BE TOGETHER AGAIN. FOR ALWAYS.

I WANT IT TO BE JUST LIKE IT WAS.

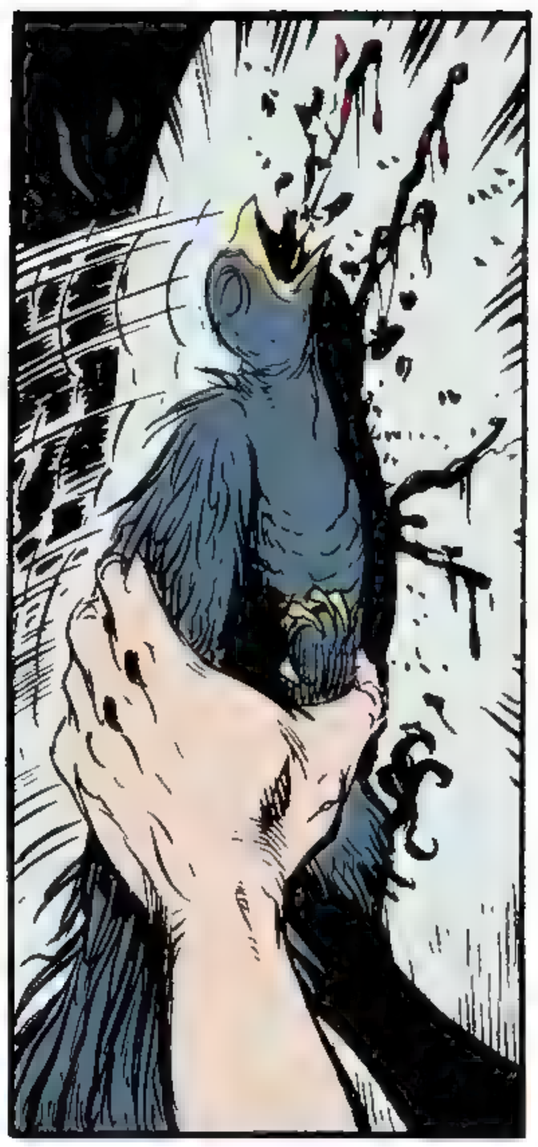
HOLD ON.

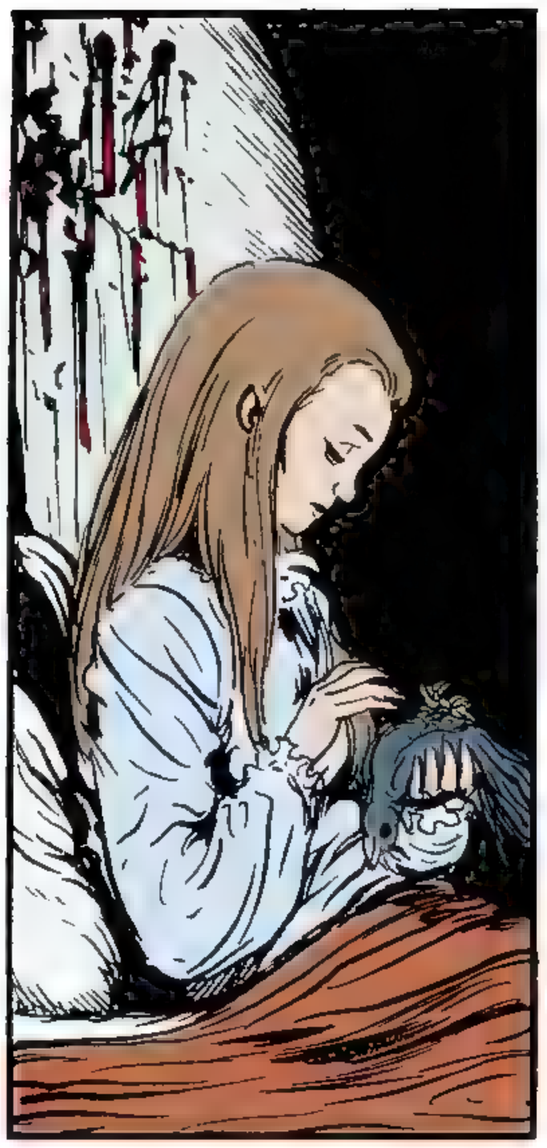
I GOT SOMETHING IN MY EYE...

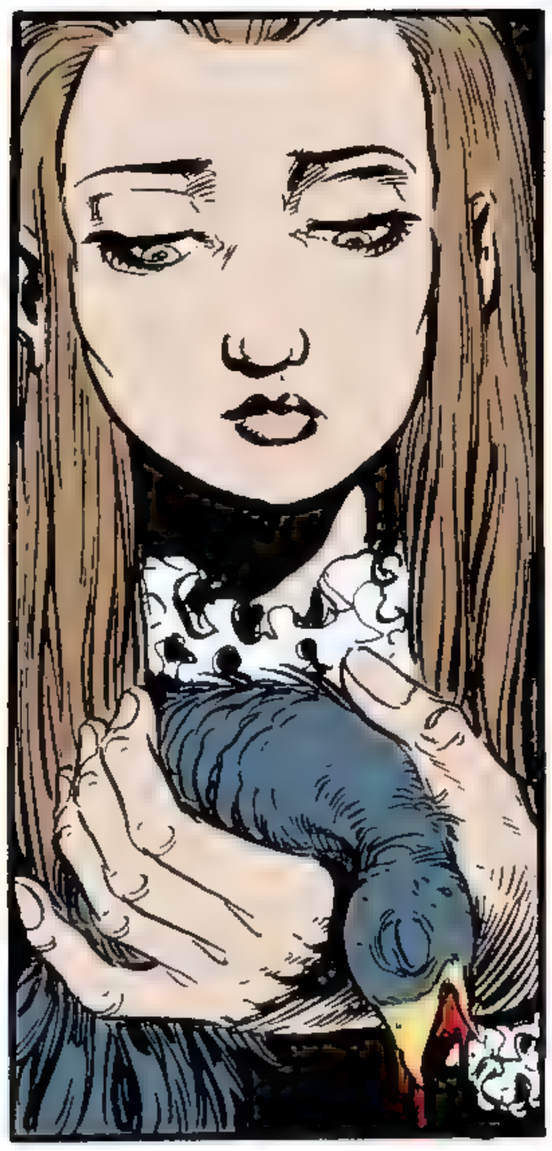
THESSALY SLEEPS.

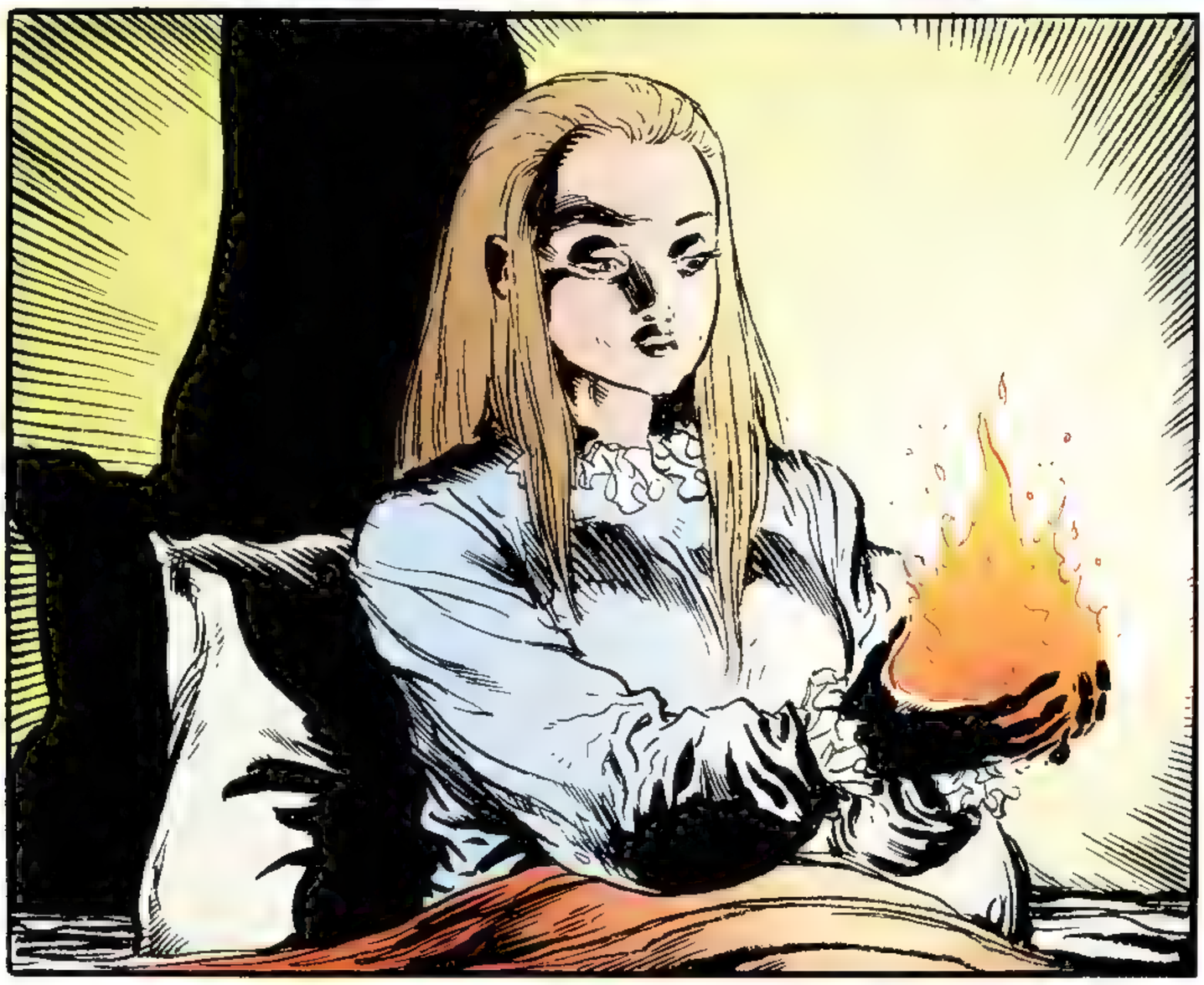
HMM.

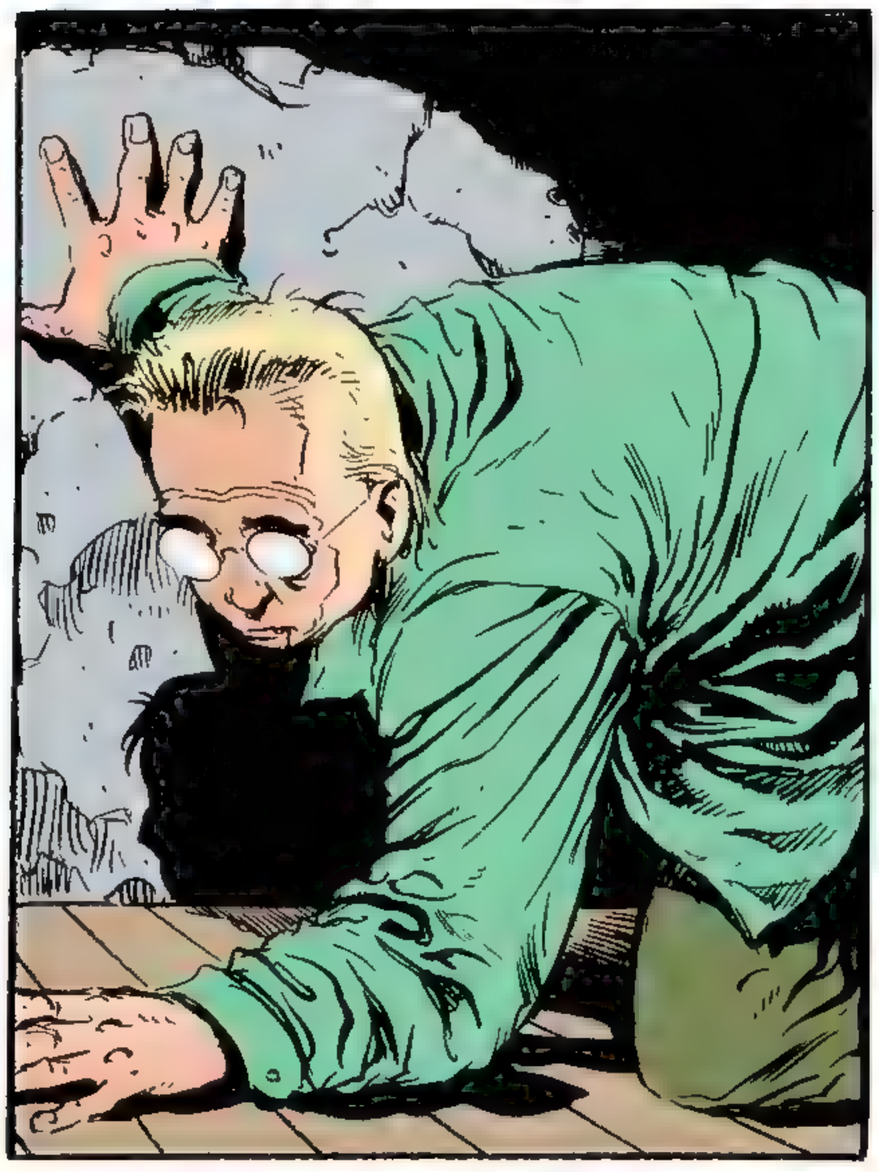
NASTY LITTLE THING, AREN'T YOU?



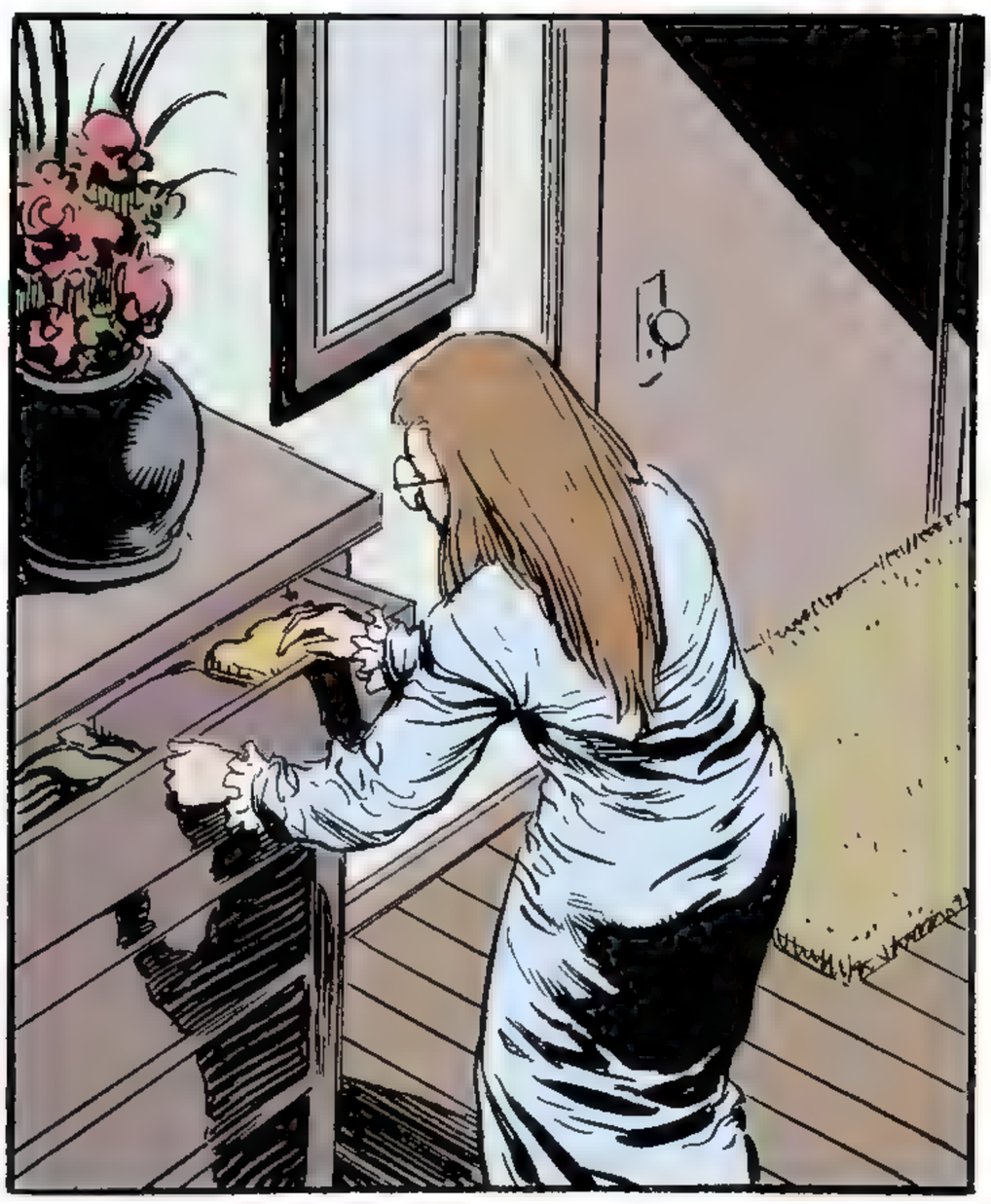


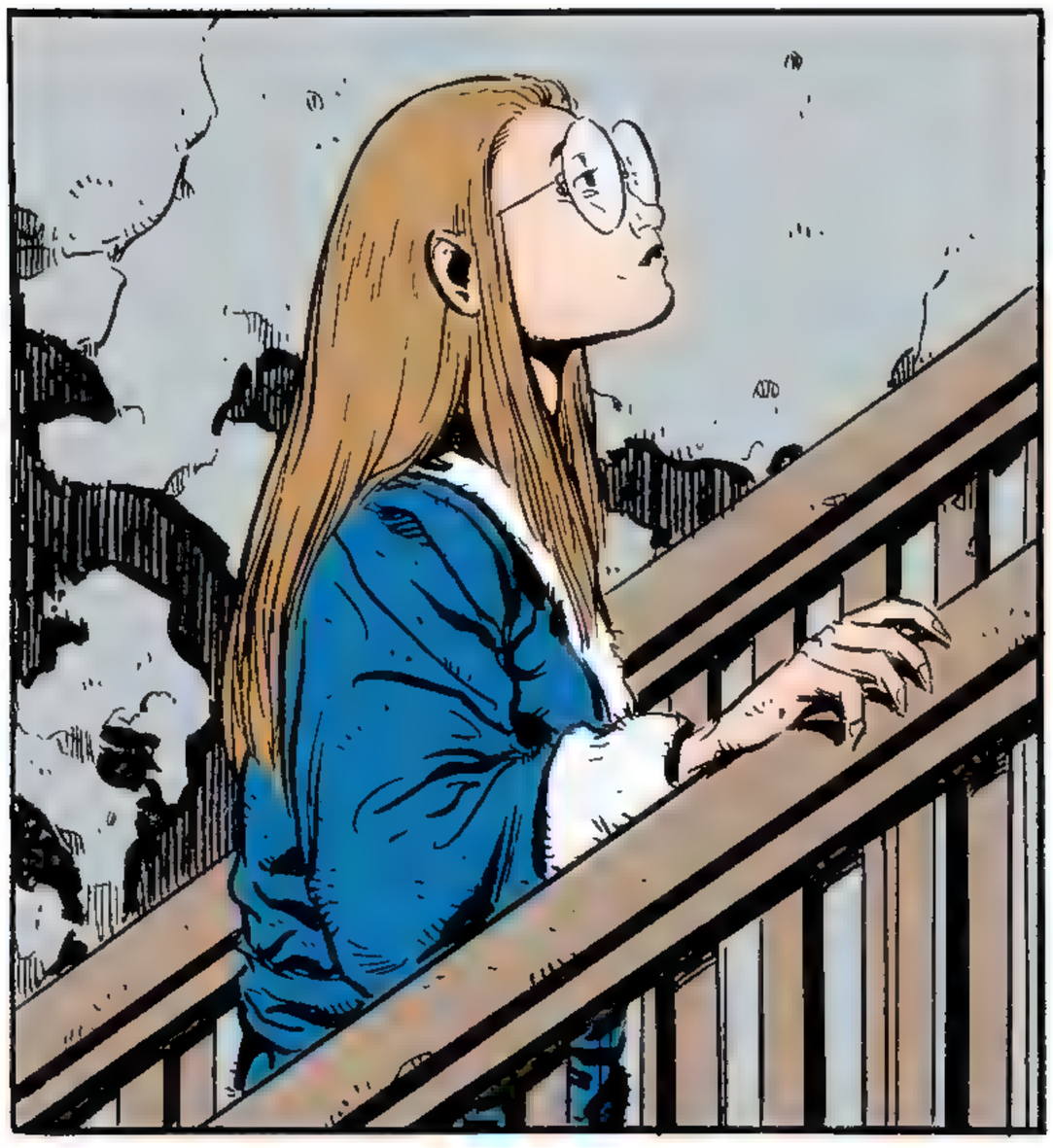


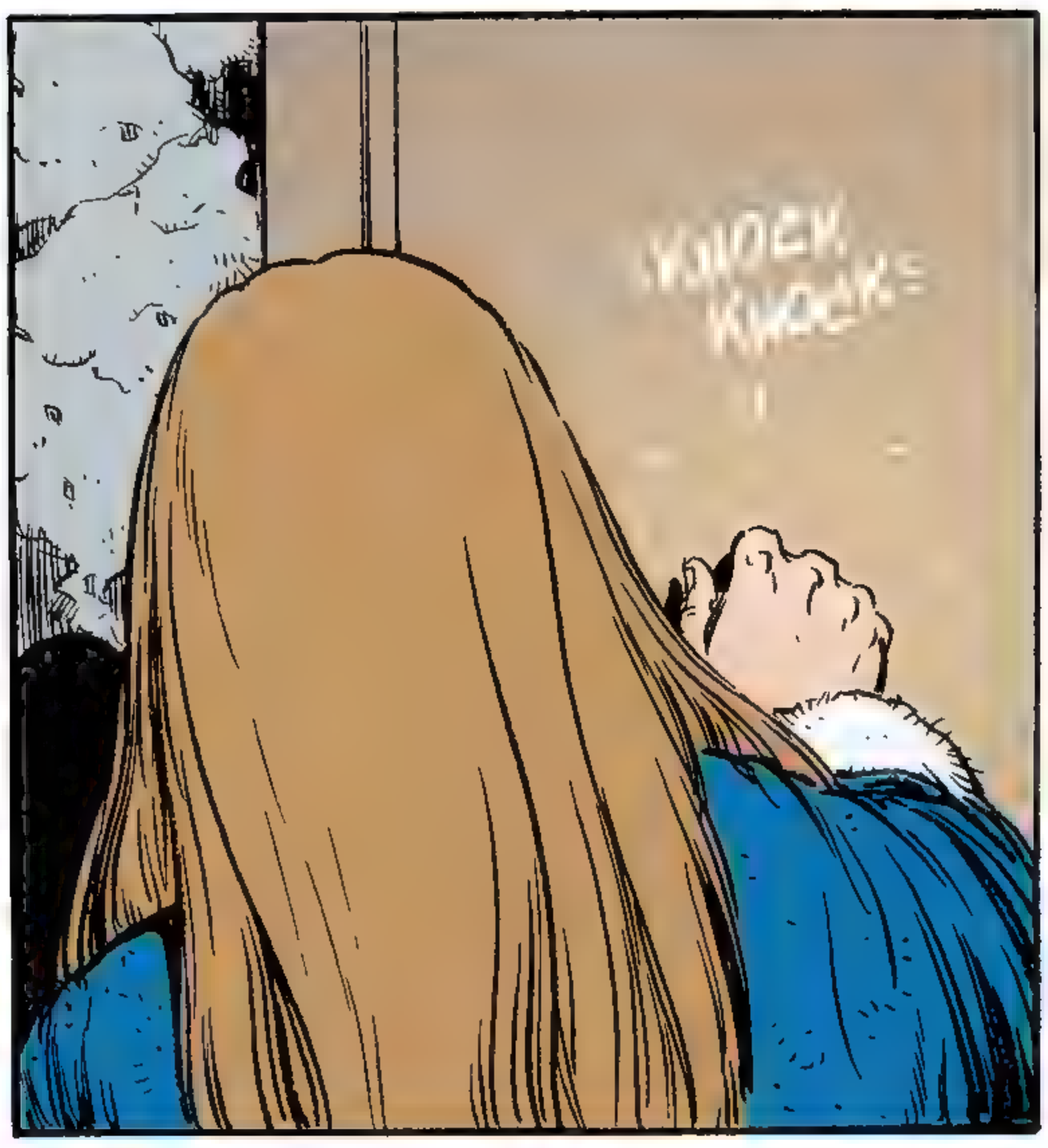




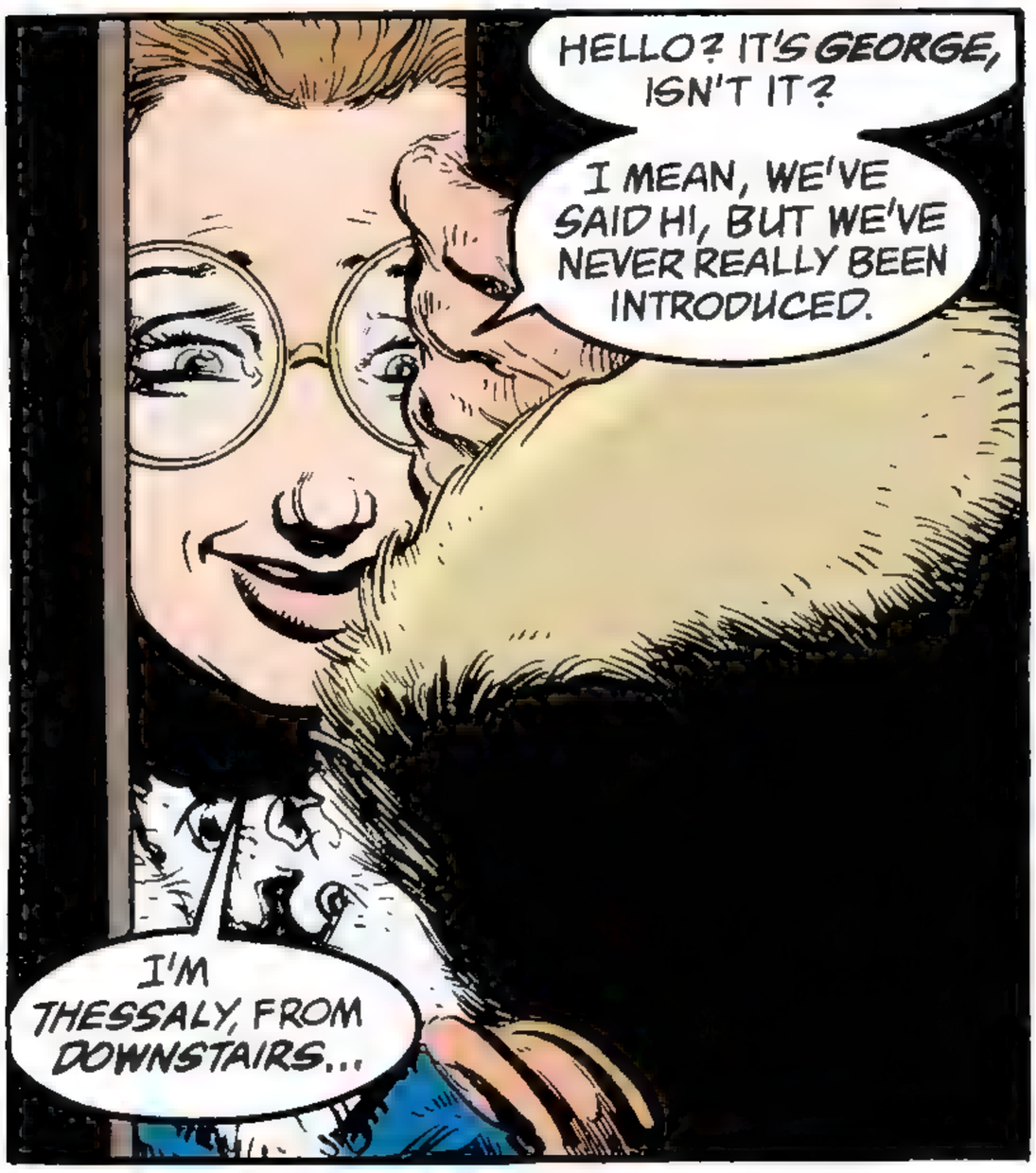
HMM.

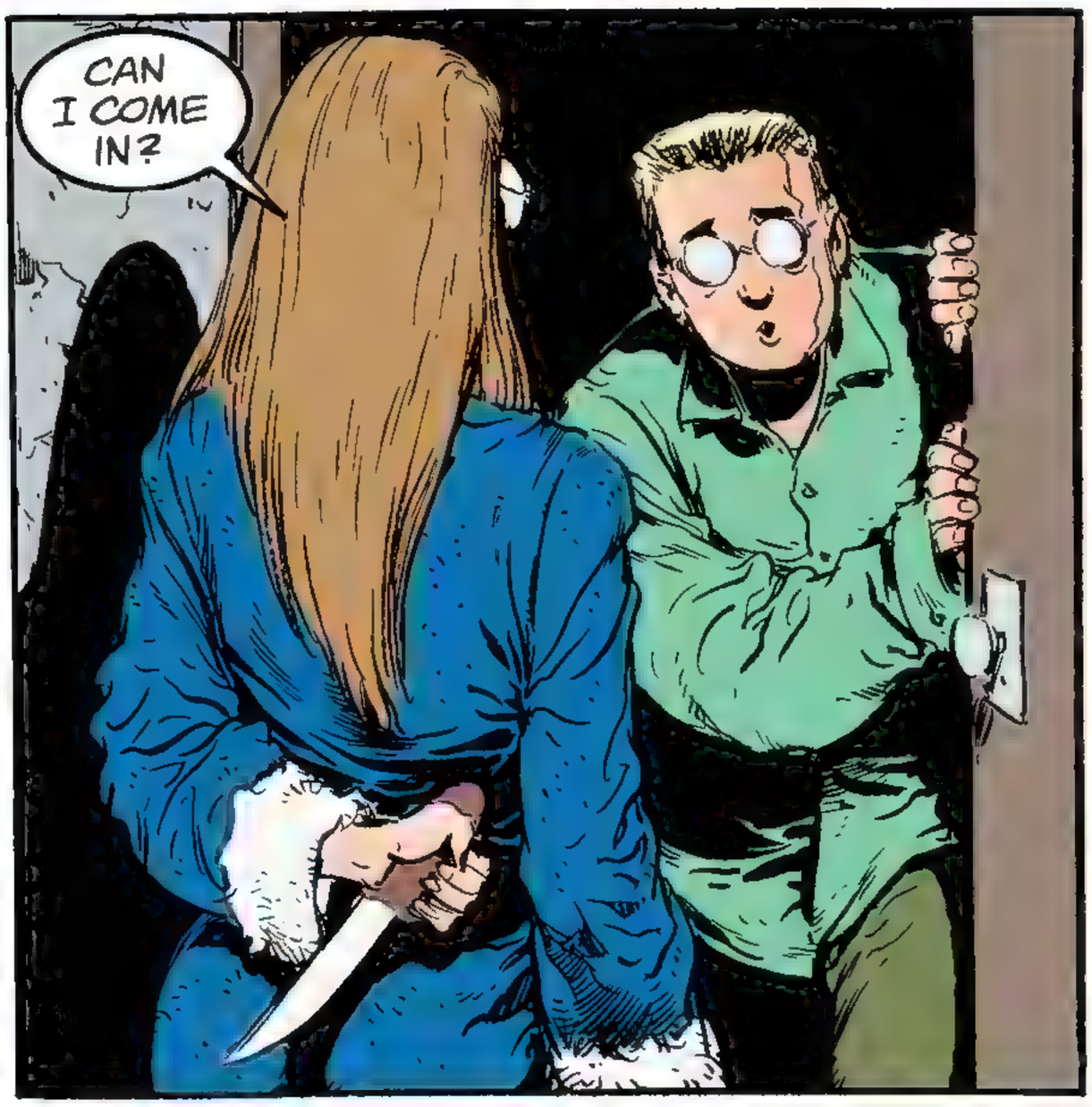





KNOCK KNOCK

UH, WHO IS IT?
HELLO?


HELLO? IT'S GEORGE, ISN'T IT?
I MEAN, WE'VE SAID HI, BUT WE'VE NEVER REALLY BEEN INTRODUCED.
I'M THESSALY, FROM DOWNSTAIRS...


CAN I COME IN?

THE LAND:

So...

D'you remember us?

I DON'T *KNOW.* SORT OF. I MEAN, IT'S COMING BACK TO ME, SORT OF, *BUT...*

Yeah. Well, I'm Wilkinson. The lady's Luz.

And the gentleman in the hat is Prinado.

THANKS, I'M BARBIE.

Princess Barbara. The heir to the land.

An' its destined savior, Luz. You mustn't forget that.

Oh yeah. Right. Great. You're going to save the land?

You're going to defeat the Black Guard, and the Cuckoo, all right. And you don't even know where you are...

Well, at least Martin Tenbones knows what he's doin'.

an' come to that, where is the great hairy wossname?

I thought he'd be coming back with you.

HE'S DEAD.

I see.

Then we are lost.

The Cuckoo has won.

Don' say that, Luz.

NO. SHE'S RIGHT.

WHAT GOOD AM I GOING TO BE?

Shut up!

For the grace of Murphy: she's the Princess, isn't she? Well, isn't she?

And she's got the Porpentine.

And the Hierogram is still unbroken.

Do you think he'd've wanted us to give up now?

Well? Do you?

I...

I DON'T *KNOW*...

THIS PLACE I HAD TO GET TO. THIS "*BRIGHTLY SHINING SEA.*"

IS IT A LONG WAY AWAY?

Too far. We need to cross this mountain range; to avoid the Black Guards.

And between us and the Sea is the Citadel of the Cuckoo...

It's a very long way.

I SEE.

WELL, THEN...

WE'D BETTER GET *GOING.*

End of Chapter Two.

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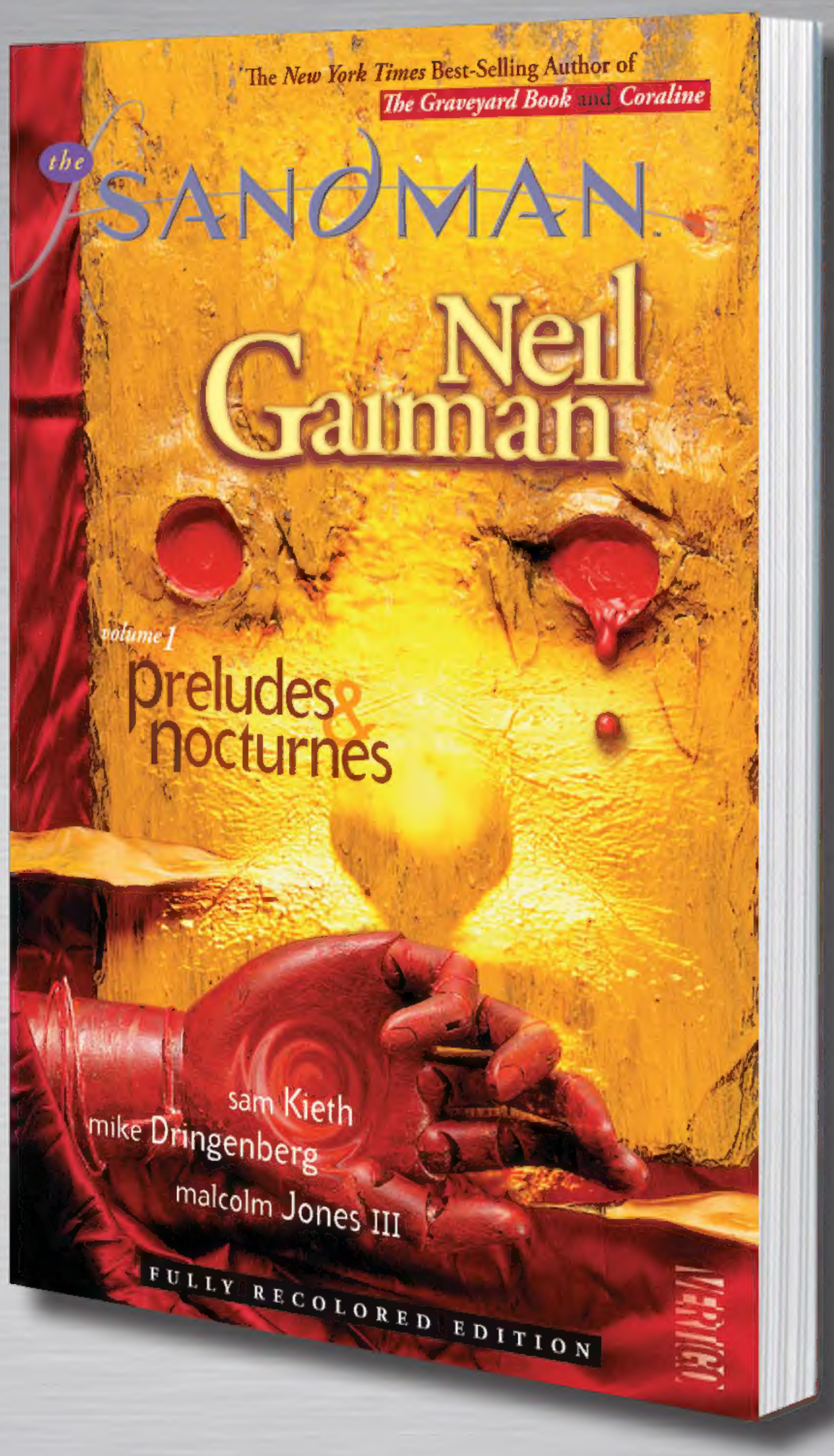
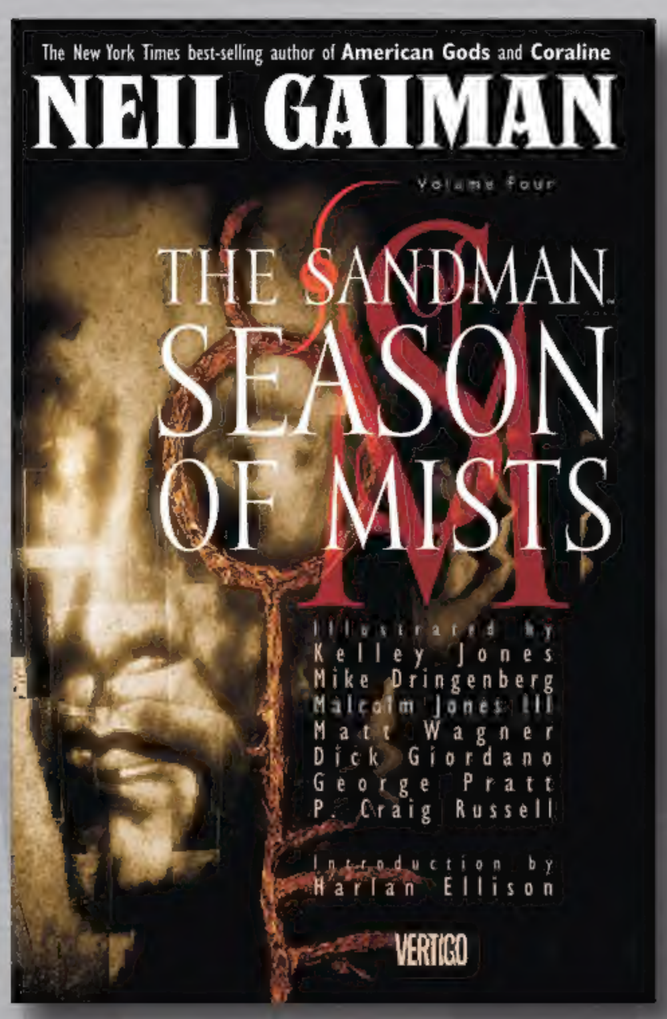
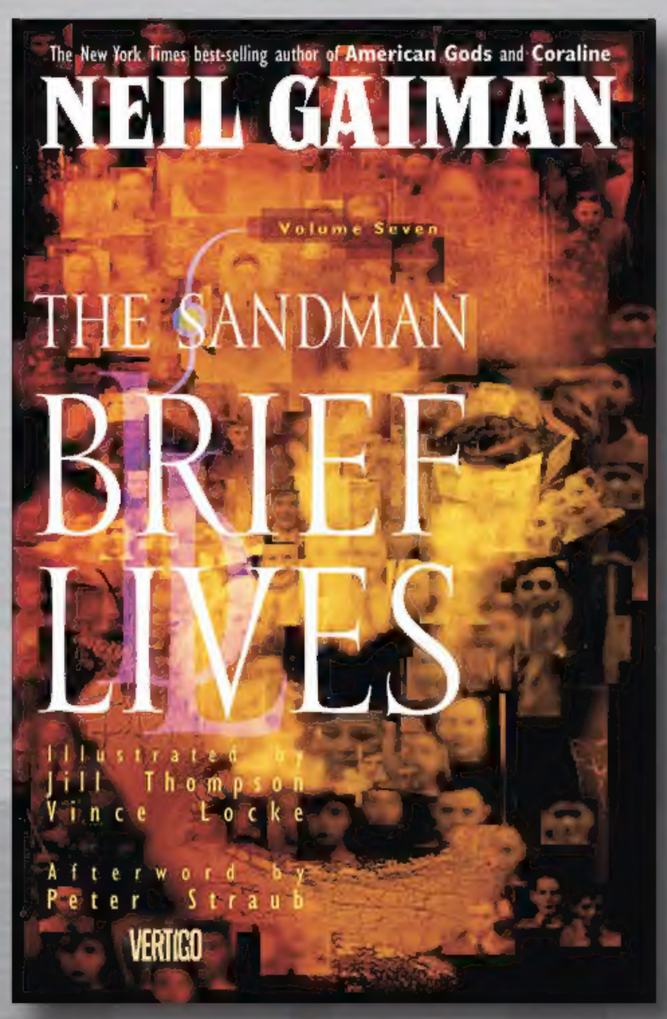


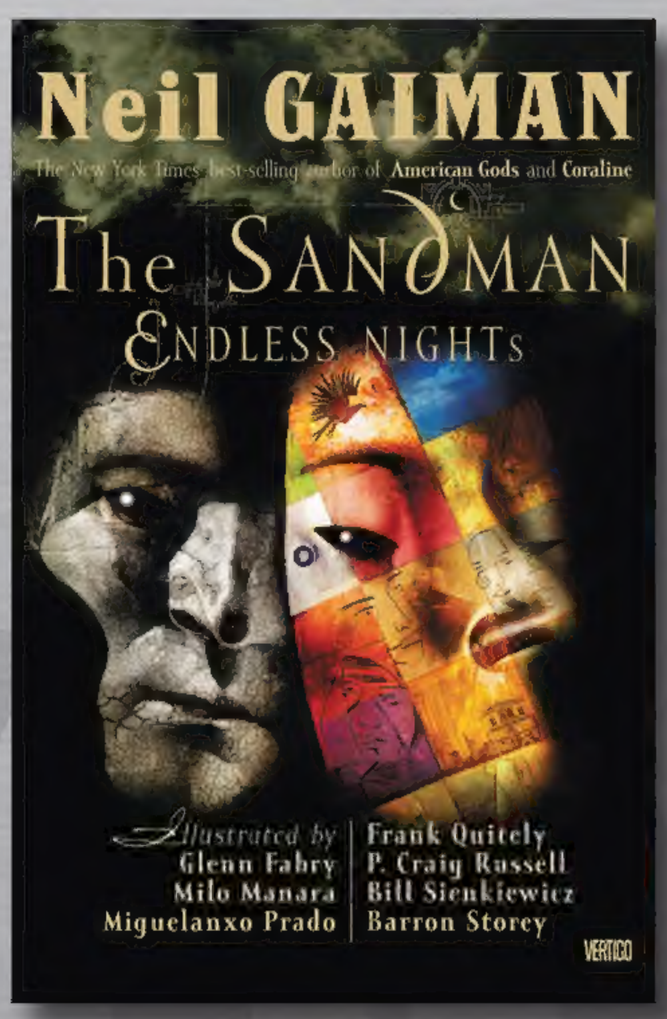
THE SANDMAN VOL. 4:
SEASON OF MISTS



THE SANDMAN VOL. 7:
BRIEF LIVES



THE SANDMAN:
ENDLESS NIGHTS



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